

Lesson @ Masjid al Salaam, Logan, Queensland, 29th July 2018

Topic 1 - Islam is Submission to Allah with Tawhid

Topic 2 - Misunderstanding the Meaning of the Shahada - لا إله إلا الله

Topic 3 – Defining Tawhid

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Topic 1 - Islam is Submission to Allah with Tawhid

Some claim to be submissive to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and the Messengers i.e. ahlu kitaab make this claim. For example, the Jews keep Saturday as the Sabbath and the Christians have their homily / sermon on a Sunday however, they have no tawhid and thus no obedience to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). Without tawhid there is no obedience to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). Without tawhid one can't be submissive to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى).

A Muslim -

1. Is obedient and submissive to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) without associating partners with Him.
2. Ensures that their deeds, words and actions comply with what Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) has ordained.
3. Frees himself from shirk and the people of shirk.

It is not sufficient for a Muslim to simply state that the religion of Christianity is wrong, yet have no issues with Christians (regarding matters of deen). The Christians suffer from corruption and distortion in regards to worshipping Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone and falsely attribute divinity to other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى).

If a Muslim does not know why he is a Muslim, or what the term Muslim means, then he is a person upon misguidance and his claim (of being a Muslim) is just a claim, one without true comprehension.

We have an example to follow in regards to the prophets of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). For example, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) freed himself of his father Azar, Nuh (عليه السلام) freed himself of his own son, and Muhammad (صلی الله علیہ وسلم) freed himself of his relatives (such as Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl i.e. by having no alliance or loyalty with them when it came to the deen). Whilst the prophets maintained blood-ties with their disbelieving relatives they still freed themselves of both them, and their shirk.

The battle of Badr astounded the mushrikeen of Quraysh. Their very own sons were ready and willing to kill their own fathers, uncles and brothers as their loyalty was to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and His prophet.

Naturally, a Muslim can do business with the disbelievers. Naturally, a Muslim can act in a courteous fashion to his disbelieving neighbours. However, having close ties to the kuffar in regards to social relationships is fraught with danger as it inclines one to not take a position against them.

The Jews and the Christians argued about the status of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) freed Ibrahim (عليه السلام) from both them and their kufr in the following verse, Surah Al Imraan (3:67) -

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists. (Sahih Int).

Thus, Islam is -

1. To submit to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) with tawhid.
2. Compliance through obedience to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى).
3. Freeing oneself from shirk and its people.

Topic 2 - Misunderstanding the Meaning of the Shahada - لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

What does لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ mean? How does one properly translate it? These questions are extremely pertinent. Whilst this phrase is oft repeated by Muslims, few actually truly understand it, or actualise it in their lives.

In regards to the word الله a famous scholar once stated that the person who is ignorant of what this word means, will be ignorant of tawhid (and therefore not a Muslim).

We learn from the hadith related to the sending of Muadh bin Jabal to Yemen that he was commanded to start his dawah by explaining tawhid. Then if the people accepted tawhid he was to teach them about the prayer etc. Thus, tawhid is the foundation of any dawah.

لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللهِ is often not translated correctly into the English language.

لا denotes negation of everything i.e. in relation to kufr bi taghout. Thus, a Muslim must disbelieve in everything that is worshipped other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى), regardless of whether it is an idol, person, stone, system etc. After this negation one then affirms - imaan billah i.e. their belief in Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). Baatil (باطل) - falsehood is denounced first, then the haqq is affirmed. Thus, Islam starts with a refutation and denouncement of everything that is baatil.

The scholars of the arabic language have all agreed that the word إِلَهٌ (hamza, la, ha) denotes ibadah (عبادة - worship). This word (linguistically) refers to anything, anyone, something or someone that is worshipped other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). It is often translated into English as God, meaning the one, supreme being. Also, the word god (lower case) can denote one of several deities (especially a male deity), an idol and it is also a word that can take the form of the female gender (i.e. goddess). According to the scholars, any word that has a good and bad meaning can't be used for Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and as such the closest translation of the this word is deity.

The word إِلَهٌ has been used for Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and for other than Him i.e. idols. We say that when this word is ascribed to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) it means that He is worshipped in truth. And when this word is used for other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى), then He only used this word to describe the mushrikeen and their deities based on the basis of what was happening - and this worship, of course, is baatil.

The correct translation of the shahada in the English language would be – **There is no deity worthy of worship, in truth, except Allah.** In this way you have rejected, negated, eliminated and abolished all those deities worshipped upon baatil.

NB - Master your aqidah before refuting the kuffar or studying comparative religion, atheism etc. You can't demolish any false concept unless you are well versed in your own beliefs.

Defining Tawhid

Defining tawhid relates to singling out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) in relation to rububiyyah, uluhiiyah and asmaa wa sifaat. This means to single out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) in his unique actions, in all acts of worship, and to single out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) in his beautiful names and perfect attributes.

Tawhid al rububiyyah relates to Allah's unique actions. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) does what He wants, when He wants and how He wants. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is independent of His creation.

Surah Al Zumar (39:62) -

اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكَفِيلٌ

Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs. (Sahih Int).

Tawhid al uluhiiyah and Tawhid al Ibadah are interchangeably used. The former is used when ascribed to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and the latter is used when ascribed to the slaves. It relates to singling out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone in all acts of worship e.g. pray, make du'a and sacrifice to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone. This is the very manifestation / purpose of our existence. To associate any ibadah with Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is an act of shirk.

Surah Al Thaariyat (51:56) -

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَنَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (Sahih Int).

E.g. Doing an act of worship to please other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is shirk.

E.g. Thinking one needs intermediaries in order to worship Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is a false principle and one based in shirk i.e. Catholicism is a prime example - Catholics approach priests to pray for them. This is the same as 'Muslims' who call upon dead 'saints' to assist them in their affairs. This is the antithesis of tawhid.

NB - Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab never disputed the rububiyyah of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى), but they did dispute in singling out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone in relation to acts of worship.

Surah al Al Faatiha (1:5) –

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It is You alone [O Allāh] that we worship and it is You alone that we ask for help. (Sahih Int).

Important Points to Highlight

The issues outlined below are not always understood by lay Muslims, yet should be -

- 1) All prophets and messengers had the same aqidah. Their aqidah was universal and one.
- 2) Dawah must start with tawhid.
- 3) The prophets disputed with their people regarding tawhid as their people were committing shirk (شرك) - sin of practising idolatry or polytheism).
- 4) The main landmark for differentiating between guidance and misguidance, in relation to dawah, is the issue of tawhid. If a group or institution sacrifices tawhid for any reason (regarding dawah) know that it is not upon the prophetic methodology.
- 5) Muslims, born into Muslim families, don't always appreciate the sweetness of imaan (إيمان) – faith) and the dangers of kufr.

- 6) Tazkiyyah al nafs (purification of the soul) and amr bi maroof nahya al munkar i.e. commanding the good and forbidding the evil (امر بالمعروف و نهى عن المنكر), starts with tawhid.
- 7) Bid'ah (بدعة – innovation in regards to acts of worship and the religion) is not permitted and is a source of misguidance.
- 8) Bid'ah (innovation in the linguistic sense) in relation to dunya (دُنْيَا – temporal world) matters is permitted.
- 9) Everything in the dunya is halal unless there is a textual evidence stating it is haraam (حرام – forbidden).
- 10) The sahaba used the word bid'ah both linguistically and with its sharii meaning. Many Muslims confuse this and thus misunderstand the term, bid'ah.
- 11) The deen has been completed and as such one can't add to it as this is illogical.
